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Man Found Guilty of Murder in 1996 Cold Case

Kenneth Stough found guilty of First Degree Murder With a Weapon, sentenced to life in prison

ORANGE COUNTY, FL – The Office of the State Attorney of the Ninth Judicial Circuit of Florida announces that Kenneth Stough, Jr. has been found guilty of First Degree Murder With A Weapon in the death of Terrance Paquette at an Orange County convenience store in 1996.

On February 3, 1996, Terrance Paquette was the current sole employee of Lil' Champ mini-mart on Clarcona Ocoee Road when he was found dead inside the bathroom of the store. Orange County deputies responded to the store just before 7 a.m. for suspicious activity after someone noticed the lights were out even though the store was usually open at the time. Once inside deputies found the victim, Mr. Paquette, deceased from 73 stab wounds.

Aside from the bathroom where Mr. Paquette was found murdered, blood from the defendant Stough was found throughout the store including the freezer door, freezer flap, the lottery machine, and the key cylinder and push bar of the entry/exit door. The evidence showed that the defendant injured himself during the attack and moved around to various parts of the store before exiting.

The case had gone cold until March 2021 when the Florida Department of Law Enforcement got an outside genetic genealogy company to test the blood evidence that had gone unknown at the time in 1996. It was found that the DNA submitted was of a relative of Carol Anne Crawford and Kenneth Stough Sr, the parents of the defendant, who had lived across the street from the victim at the time of the crime. Now residing in Eustis, the defendant was located, and law enforcement began surveillance. Eventually he was seen discarding a bag of empty beer cans. Once collected by investigators, DNA from the beer cans was used to link the defendant to the to the unknown blood that was left at the scene of the crime.

After a five-day trial concluding Friday afternoon, an Orange County jury found defendant Kenneth Stough guilty as charged in the death of Terrance Paquette. Stough was sentenced to life in prison in the Florida Department of Corrections.

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